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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the establishment of shared governance in the College of Education at Mississippi State University, and the transformation of a dean's advisory council into a representative council with an expanding role. Emphasis is on the importance of defining the faculty council's role, its constituencies, its assessment procedures, and its Relationship to the dean. Goals to guide its work during the second year include: (1) determining a fair formula for allocating resources; (2) studying revisions in tenure and promotion guidelines and recommend a faculty position; (3) reviewing the required core courses of study in relation to curriculum congruence and instructional quality; and (4) shaping the organizational culture through displays recognizing faculty accomplishments. Advantages of the site-based council are seen to include determining short- and long-range interests and needs of faculty, articulating expectations, developing goals, establishing standards for review of proposed administrative actions (curricula, budgets, and staffing), improving interdepartmental communications, and allocating resources fairly. Appended are: the council's guidelines, results of a faculty survey, and a council meeting agenda. (BF)

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Faculty Governance: The Key to Actualizing Professionalism

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Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
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Shared governance, an idea developed in the 1960s, applies to university faculty sharing in decisions and policy making at institutions of higher learning. The issue of faculty involvement in the governance has concerned faculty members on university campuses for years (Schuster 1991). Contending that faculty involvement in the decision-making process in higher education is an important indicator of a healthy university, Wolvin (1991) states, "A great university is governed through active, informed participation by all constituents--faculty, administrators, and staff. Ultimately the institution is only as strong as its faculty is strong" (p. 26).

Typically called senates, institution-wide faculty governing bodies have functioned at universities for over three decades. Although the term generally refers to sharing in decisions and policy development, there is little agreement regarding the definition and structure of a generic "shared governance" model. Too narrow a definition may result in controversy and misunderstanding between faculty and administrators.

Some educators believe the faculty's role in governance has been an issue clouded by political and economic events affecting academe (Gerber, 1997; Lee, 1979). While others contend that shared governance keeps the faculty engaged in a dialogue about issues facing higher education and provides a means for addressing criticisms that higher education is a dinosaur whose personnel, governance structures, and practices are poorly designed and inflexible to changing social, technological, economic, and political conditions (Ramo, 1997).

Shared governance at the college or professional school level within the framework of a university senate is a recent phenomenon and represents *a new point of evolution* in governance practices. This paper discusses our experience in establishing shared governance in the College of Education at Mississippi State University and ways that sharing in governance encourages professionalism among the faculty.

An Evolutionary Process

The concept of shared governance emerged from one of many committees dotting the college's committee-landscape and has evolved slowly. From 1989 to 1995, the Faculty Advisory Committee (College of Education Handbook, 1995) was a standing committee whose chief purpose was to advise the dean. The committee rarely met, but an unusual situation occurred during the 1994 spring semester which set the stage for shared governance. When asked to screen faculty applicants for alumni awards, the committee declined the charge. Declining the charge to screen faculty awards marked a significant change in attitude among committee members. From that point forward, the committee set its own agenda for establishing shared governance. In the spring of 1996, the Faculty Advisory Committee submitted governance guidelines to the faculty of the College of Education for a vote. The guidelines were approved and the Faculty Council was created and became functional for the 1996-97 academic year (Blendinger, Cornelious, & McGrath, 1997).

In addition to establishing the council, the guidelines defined who would be considered official *faculty* of the College of Education and the role they would play in shared governance. According to the guidelines, the faculty "shall consider all matters referred to it by the Dean or the Faculty Council or individual faculty members and make recommendations concerning them at its discretion." (A copy of the guidelines is provided in the addendum.)

Once established, the Faculty Council moved rapidly to increase communication and encourage cooperation by becoming proactive in advising the dean on issues deemed important to the mission of the college. According to the guidelines, the "COE Faculty shall function individually or collectively to recommend and refer to the Council those matters dealing with the academic community and welfare of the College which it desires to have the Council consider."

As written in the shared governance guidelines, the first general faculty meeting was held May 2, 1997. Although the meeting was held on a Friday afternoon at 2:00 p.m., over 100 faculty members (approximately 99%) attended. Faculty Council representatives discussed

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results of the faculty retreats, steps for restructuring the college, an NCATE update, and faculty survey results. Attendance at subsequent meetings remained high.

Involvement in administrative affairs evolved slowly, but by January of 1997, the Faculty Council became involved in policy development. An ad hoc committee comprised of three council members was appointed to work with the associate dean for instruction in developing a planning, policy, and procedures manual for the college.

In January of 1997 the Faculty Council reviewed revisions to the college's promotion and tenure guidelines. The Council's involvement came in response to a request made by the Department of Technology and Education faculty. The Faculty Council asked for the opportunity to read and discuss any revisions of the present guidelines. The reason for the request was based on the Council's interest in issues affecting the general welfare of the faculty. When the Dean and the Promotion and Tenure Committee disagreed on the tentative revisions, the Council intervened in the process, not simply making suggestions but recommending how faculty members should vote on the proposed changes.

Also in January, the Faculty Council suggested a procedure for the dean's role in council meetings. The procedure calls for the chair of the Faculty Council to meet with the dean a few days before scheduled meetings to review the agenda and discuss the items for which the dean needed to be present. The reason for taking this position was to encourage open discussion on sensitive issues prior to submitting recommendations to the dean or general faculty.

In a special April 28, 1997 meeting at the request of the dean, the Faculty Council considered department presentations regarding the part of the budget allocation process referred to as the 10% quality allocation. Council members were concerned, however, that the dean was unable to identify new monies and the 10% quality portion would come from the departments present funding. Department heads presented their positions on the allocation process. The Faculty Council unanimously agreed that all the college's programs demonstrated high quality and no reductions should be made in any department's allocations for travel and

subsistence, contractual services, commodities, and equipment. The dean's "quality idea" was put on hold indefinitely.

The Faculty Council surveyed the faculty in April of 1997. Its purpose was to solicit faculty views whether to change the college's name, modify sections of the governance guidelines, and redefine roles of department heads. Sixty-five faculty members responded and information gathered was given to a college task force on restructuring. (Results of the survey are provided in the addendum.)

After finishing and reflecting on its first year of operation, the Faculty Council developed goals to guide its work during the 1997-98 academic year. This represented a major shift in the evolutionary development of the Faculty Council as a major force within the College of Education. The four goals were to:

1. Review the College's 1997-98 budget to determine a fair formula for allocating FY 1998-99 resources (e.g., faculty travel monies) in relation to department and unit concerns and needs.

2. Study revisions made to the College's promotion and tenure guidelines and recommend or not recommend changes to the general faculty.

3. Review the College's required undergraduate and graduate core courses of study, especially in relation to curriculum congruence and instructional quality.

4. Shape the College's organizational culture by establishing displays which recognize and celebrate faculty accomplishments (e.g., books published).

Council members have focused their efforts on accomplishing these goals and are confident that significant progress will be made by the conclusion of the academic year. In addition to developing goals, the Council created a newsletter for the purpose of keeping faculty informed about issues being addressed. (Samples of an agenda, minutes, and newsletter are provided in the addendum.)

Actualizing Professionalism

Faculty members represent the best source of ideas for improving a college or school of education from within. Their expertise and advice can improve the governing process. If there is

merit in the three-fold assumption that faculty naturally want to do their jobs well, contribute to the organization, and experience pride in their work. Then a system, such as shared governance, established to salsify these goals provides the key to actualizing professionalism.

As the 21st century rapidly approaches, more faculties are recognizing that deans and their administrative staffs cannot unilaterally solve the complex and interrelated issues confronting colleges of education. Deans simply do not have the resources to handle such a welter of problems. If colleges of education are to function effectively, faculty must share in decision making and policy development

Site-based faculty councils (or senates) provide effective mechanisms for sharing governance at the college or professional school level in large universities because they provide the means for:

1. Determining short- and long-range interests and needs of faculty.
2. Articulating expectations of faculty, staff, and students.
3. Developing goals and planning strategies.
4. Establishing standards and procedures for the review and evaluation of proposed administrative action dealing with curricula offerings, budgetary practices, and faculty recruitment and retention.
5. Increasing knowledge and understanding of issues among departments and units.
6. Allocating resources equitably.

Realizing the potential of faculty councils, however, is no easy matter. Councils will only govern well if their members demand healthy debate, dialogue, and arrive at consensus on issues raised. Defining its role, constituencies, assessment procedures, and relationship to the dean, are all necessary if faculty councils hope to function effectively.

Shared governance is a management system that allows decisions to be made "at home." It means shifting some authority from deans to faculties for matters such as curriculum, instruction, and budgeting. Shared governance requires the opportunity to share in the decision-making process. Giving faculties more authority and responsibility for improving

colleges of education from within and holding them accountable for the results significantly contributes to professionalism.

Establishing a faculty council (or senate) affirms that the interests of an open, equitable and viable college of education will best be served by bringing into the decision and policy-making process faculty who will ultimately serve as ambassadors for professionalism. Shared governance, in which all faculty play a key role, has potential for making colleges of education more respected.

Summary

Shared governance in the College of Education at Mississippi State University has been a steadily evolving process. The desire to share in the governance of the college germinated from dissatisfaction among faculty members serving with little purpose on an advisory committee. Reasons for the dissatisfaction were addressed and guidelines establishing shared governance emerged.

Our personal experience as architects of the guidelines and charter members of the council indicates that faculty want to be involved in decision making and policy development. Putting shared governance into practice must be done slowly and carefully. Through its representative council, the College of Education faculty has incrementally expanded its role in addressing important issues such as critiquing promotion and tenure criteria, curriculum changes, and budget allocations.

Moving from a position of initial skepticism to strong advocacy, Faculty Council members have progressed to *planning their work and working their plan.* To keep from becoming distracted by emerging issues, the Council formulated goals to guide its work. To become a major player in the decision-making process, the Council turned its attention to the budget. To facilitate communication with the faculty, the Council developed a newsletter which it distributes throughout the academic year.

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If colleges of education are to involve faculty in policy development and shared decision making, more anecdotal cases of faculty councils at work are needed in order to develop an authentic literature base addressing faculty governance. This paper, along with its accompanying artifacts, makes a meaningful contribution toward that end.

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SHARED GOVERNANCE ADDENDUM

The following artifacts are presented in this addendum:

Shared Governance Guidelines
Faculty Council Survey
Agenda for January 28, 1998
Minutes for January 28, 1998
Copy of the November newsletter

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

GUIDELINES FOR THE FACULTY'S ROLE IN GOVERNANCE

The three-fold purpose of these guidelines is to (1) define who is officially College of Education faculty, (2) identify the faculty's role in the governance of the college, and (3) create the Faculty Council as the primary means for putting shared governance into practice. These guidelines pertain specifically to the College of Education at Mississippi State University and not to the university in general.

A. Composition of the Faculty

The College of Education (COE) Faculty shall consist of all resident professionals of the College who hold the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, senior research scientist, research scientist II, research scientist I, research scientist, research assistant, and such other ranks as recommended by the Faculty Council and approved by the COE Faculty.

B. Voting Eligibility

All the members of the COE Faculty may vote on all matters put before the faculty.

C. Officers

The Chair of the Faculty Council shall preside at faculty meetings. The Vice Chair of the Faculty Council shall preside in the chair's absence. The Secretary of the Council shall act as the recorder at meetings.

D. Meetings of the Faculty

The Faculty shall meet at least twice a year, once in the spring semester, once in the fall semesters, and at other times upon call of the Dean or of the Faculty Council or by petition of 25 percent of the Faculty. A quorum shall consist of 35 members of the Faculty who are present and eligible to vote. Notices of meetings shall be sent out at least two weeks in advance.

E. Functions of the COE Faculty

The general purpose of the COE Faculty is to participate in an advisory role in the governance of the college. Three specific functions of the COE Faculty are as follows:

1. The COE Faculty shall consider all matters referred to it by the Dean or the Faculty Council or individual faculty members and make recommendations concerning them at its discretion.

2. The COE Faculty shall elect according to the guidelines presented in Section F, the members of the Faculty Council.

3. The COE Faculty shall function individually or collectively to recommend and refer to the Council those matters dealing with the academic community and welfare of the College which it would desire to have the Council consider.

F. COE Faculty Council

The major purpose of the Faculty Council is to represent College of Education faculty in advising the Dean on matters directly related to the College in fulfillment of its mission. Specifically, the Council shall:

1. Serve as a forum on matters pertaining to the role and mission of the College.
2. Seek to be representative of the interests, needs, and views of the faculty in general.
3. Consider all matters brought before it and make recommendations to the Dean concerning them.

The maximum membership of the Faculty Council shall be 15. Members shall be elected as follows:

1. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction shall elect three representatives.
2. The Department of Counselor Education and Educational Psychology shall elect two representatives.
3. The Department of Educational Leadership shall elect one representative.
4. The Department of Music Education shall elect two representatives.
5. The Department of Physical Education, Health Education and Recreation shall elect two representatives.
6. The Department of Technology and Education shall elect two representatives.
7. All units other than academic departments (e.g., Research and Curriculum Unit for Vocational and Technical Education) shall come together to select a total of three representatives.

Each member of the Council shall serve a period of two years. Election of members shall be held during the spring semester with membership to be assumed in April. A member may serve three consecutive terms, after which s/he is ineligible for membership on the Council for a year.

Officers of the Faculty Council shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. These officers shall be elected in April by a majority vote of the 15 members of the council or those members present at the meeting. Officers shall serve for a period of two years and may not serve more than two consecutive terms in one office. The Dean shall provide in the COE's budget an appropriation of funds and resources sufficient to allow the Faculty Council to perform its functions.

The Faculty Council shall meet once a month during the academic year and upon call of the chair or petition of eight members. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with specific guidelines developed by council members and/or Robert's Rules of Order. For conducting business, a quorum shall consist of eight members present and eligible to vote.

Guidelines were put into operation on August 15, 1996
and revised during the 1997-98 academic year.

THE FACULTY COUNCIL OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION : SURVEY RESULTS

Sixty-five faculty members responded to the survey conducted by the COE Faculty Council during the month of April. The purpose of the survey was to solicit faculty input concerning changes in the college's name, faculty governance guidelines, and department head criteria. Results were as follows:

1. Should the college's name be changed to the *College of Education and Human Development*? (Please note that approximately 40 percent of the students pursuing studies in our college are not in teacher education.)

   Yes 34% No 48% Uncertain 18%

2. Should faculty guidelines be changed from "The Dean of the College of Education shall chair general (COE) faculty meetings" to "The Chair of the Faculty Council shall chair general (COE) faculty meetings."

   Change 50% Don't change 39% Uncertain 11%

3. Should faculty guidelines be changed from "Each member of the (Faculty) Council shall serve a period of <u>two years</u>" to serving <u>three years</u> starting with the 1998 elections.

   Change 32% Don't change 55% Uncertain 13%

4. Should the term for Council officers be changed from <u>one year</u> to <u>two years</u>.

   Change 63% Don't change 30% Uncertain 7%

5. Please put a check in front of the department head/chair system you prefer:

   A. 30% The college should stay with appointed department heads.

   B. 30% The college should move to elected department chairs.

   C. 40% It should be left to the discretion of each department to make its own decision regarding appointed department heads or elected department chairs.

6. Should the word "head" be changed to "chair" regardless of whether or not the position of department administrator is appointed or elected?

   Yes 38% No 32% Uncertain 30%

7. Regardless of whether the position is appointed or elected, what length of terms do you favor for department administrators?

   One year 18% Two years 26% Three Years 56%

Information gathered will be given to the college restructuring committee established by Dean Graves to address the issue of restructuring the College of Education.

Vince McGrath, Faculty Council Vice-Chair

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FACULTY COUNCIL

Agenda for the January 28, 1998 Meeting
COE Conference Room (Allen 319B): 12:00 Noon

1. Review of the minutes for the January 21, 1998 meeting.

2. Straw-formula for analyzing department/unit budgeted E & G funds.

3. Discussion of the need to develop guidelines to assist department heads and unit directors in presentation of their budget requests.

4. Discussion of the need to develop a rating system (formula) for allocating "extra funds" to departments on the basis of quality.

5. Progress report on the Council's goal pertaining to shaping the College of Education's organizational culture through establishing displays recognizing faculty members for their accomplishments.

6. Networking between departments--information exchange.

7. Other items not on the agenda.

Agenda prepared by Jack Blendinger, Chair.

Agenda sent to Dean Bill Graves and the following council members: Patti Abraham, Craig Cashwell, Benita Cahalane, Kent Coffey, Linda Cornelious, Melanie Hutto, Pam Kirk, Duncan MacMillan, John Martin, Douglas McConnell, Vincent McGrath, Dennis O'Nan, Mike Osaji, and Steuart Watson.

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FACULTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
JANUARY 28, 1998

Minutes of the January 21, 1998 were reviewed and approved by the members present: Patti Abraham, Craig Cashwell, Benita Cahalane, Kent Coffey, Duncan MacMillian, John Martin, Douglas McConnell, Vincent McGrath, Mike Osaji, Steuart Watson, and Chair Jack Blendinger.

This meeting was called to provide FC members with an opportunity to discuss and organize a method for measuring quality indicators for the upcoming budget presentations by department heads regarding their needs and concerns. Jack Blendinger developed a budget analysis straw-formula that would allow FC members a way to rate each departments proposed need for allocating extra funds. Discussion of the strengths and needs of this formula took most of the hour. Members agreeded that the formula was a long way from identifying a method of "defining quality", but was a start. Each representative was given the charge to take the formula and apply it to his/her department before the next meeting.

One item of continued business was the Council's goal of shaping the College of Education's organizational culture. It was reported by Jack B. and Vince Mc. that they met with Dean Graves and that a display case would be ordered to highlight faculty achievements.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 and another meeting planned for February 18.

Minutes recorded by Benita Cahalane, Secretary.

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